July 11, 2017

To whom it may concern,

Highline Medical Center requested a letter describing the impacts related to emergency medical services (EMS) divert for patients with acute coronary syndrome who may need urgent coronary intervention.

King County Medic One is the primary provider of advanced life support in the Highline Medical Center catchment area and relies on local hospital partners to provide EMS medical control and receive a range of patients with acute medical illness. When a hospital is unable to provide advanced service like coronary intervention, King County Medic One will divert the patient from the catchment hospital to the next geographically-available appropriate hospital. Such diversion is not ideal for the patient as it can delay definitive evaluation and care while also placing the patient further from home and potentially outside their local system of medical care. Moreover, King County Medic One is challenged to and cannot guarantee to respond to a given hospital to transport to alternate facilities when a hospital is unable to deliver a standard intervention such as catheterization to a patient already in-house.

From an EMS perspective, additional travel away from the assigned paramedic service area can lead to subsequent delays and gaps in EMS response though the regional emergency system works hard to mitigate these delays. From an operational and clinical perspective, the ideal system would have each hospital provide high-quality, reliable coronary catheterization services.

Sincerely,

Keith Keller  
Medical Services Administrator  
King County Medic One

Peter Kudenchuk MD  
Program Medical Director  
King County Medic One

Thomas Rea MD  
Medical Program Director  
King County EMS